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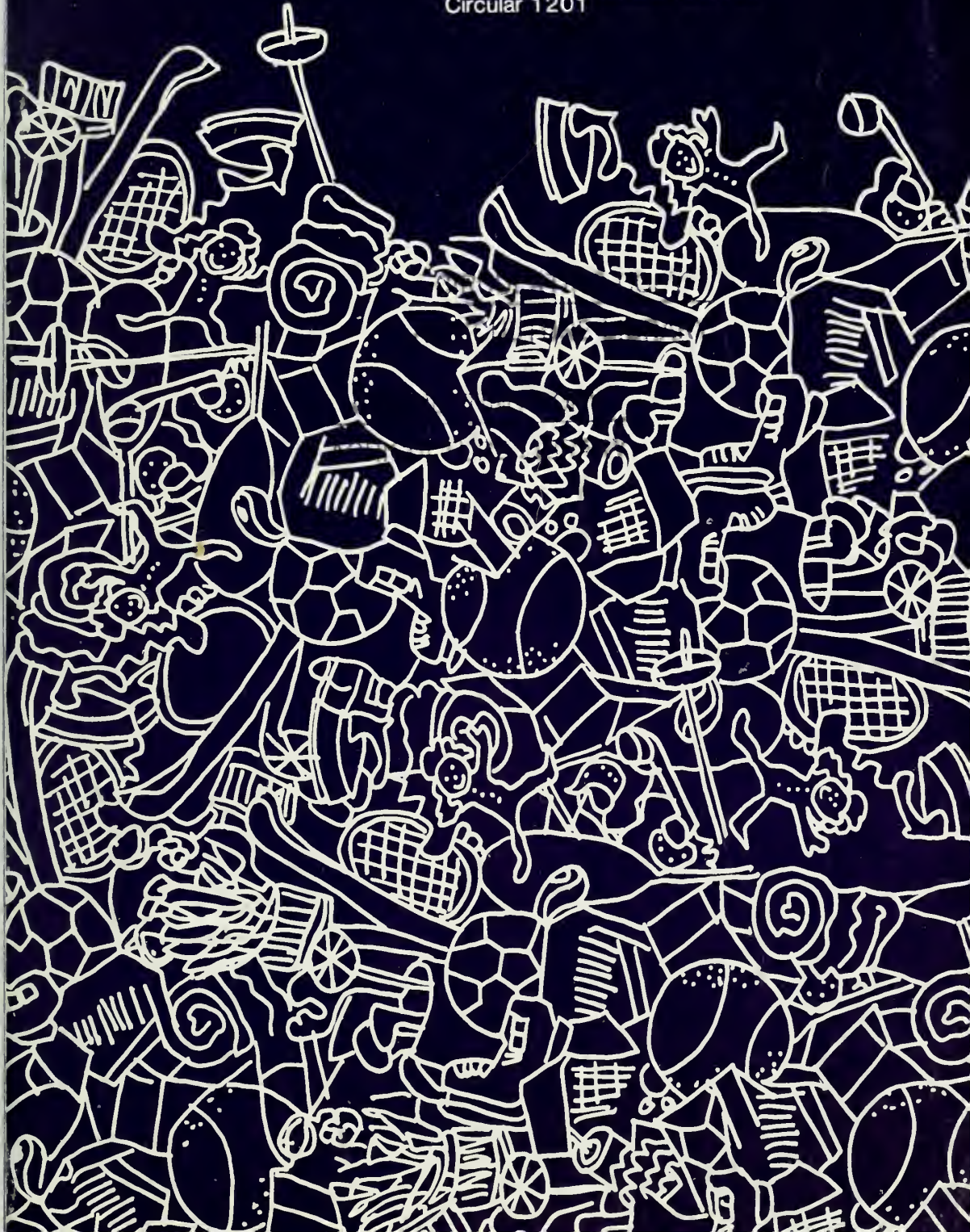


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# A Place for Everything

University of Illinois  
At Urbana-Champaign  
College of Agriculture  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Circular 1201



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STORAGE IS A MAJOR PROBLEM IN MANY HOMES. Today's living quarters are often smaller than those of the past. In newer homes such potential storage areas as attics, basements, and spare rooms are rare. Nonetheless, having "a place for everything and everything in its place" is a goal many people would like to achieve.

Is storage a problem in your home? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you find it easy to keep your home neat and orderly?
- Do you have a place for each item you need to store?
- Do you store items near where you use them instead of wherever you can find room for them?
- Are stored items organized so that you can locate and retrieve them easily?
- Are items stored so that they will be safe from harm? For example, are woolen garments stored in mothproof containers and important documents in fireproof containers?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you can benefit by examining your home's storage space and developing a plan for using it more effectively.

The purpose of storage, of course, is to provide a place to keep unused items until they are needed. Almost every home has some complicated storage problems because in most cases a large number of items must be stored where they will be readily accessible. Solving storage problems requires careful thought about the items to be stored and the space available.

When people consider their storage problems, the first thing they usually think about is the amount of storage space available. In fact, the amount, location, and type of storage space are often factors in determining how well satisfied people are with their homes. The layout of the house, the type and amount of built-in storage space available (such as closets, cabinets, and bookcases), and the flexible or movable storage units that are present (such as trunks and chests) are central factors in planning for efficient storage.

The items that must be stored will depend on the family's size, interests, and living habits. As a family matures, its storage needs change. To maintain effective use of storage space, the family's storage plan must be adjusted periodically to accommodate those changes.

Because every person and family is different, no single storage plan will work for everyone. If you want to handle storage effectively, you will need to develop your own strategy. Achieving good use of storage is similar to controlling weight and sticking to a budget: there are no easy ways to do it. With some effort, though, most families can meet their storage needs satisfactorily.

This circular will help you analyze your storage needs, assess the available storage space in your home, and develop a successful storage plan. The information presented here will help you:

- Review the items you need to store, taking into account the size and life-style of your family
- Become more aware of the types of storage space available
- Understand the principles of good storage and how they apply to your situation
- Apply those principles in developing your storage plan.

## ASSESSING YOUR STORAGE NEEDS

The first step in developing a storage plan is to gain a clear understanding of what items must be stored. Since storage needs are so closely related to the characteristics of the family itself, it pays to start by taking a close look at your family — its size, composition, and life-style. Start by asking yourself these basic questions:

- Who lives in our home? What are their ages and sexes?
- Do they have special needs, interests, or handicaps?
- Will the composition of the household change significantly during the next five years — for example, will there be more children? Will some grown children be leaving home? Will some adult relatives be moving in?
- Are there any pets for which items such as supplies and equipment must be stored?

Naturally, the size of your family will have a direct effect on how much storage space you need. The more people that live in your home, the more items there will be to store. The composition of the family can make a big difference, too. As Figure 1 illustrates, an infant's toys can easily be stored on a closet shelf or in a toy chest, whereas the recreational equipment needed by a teenager — items such as a bicycle, tennis racket, or canoe — usually requires much more space. Providing convenient storage space for the items needed in caring for an infant poses still different storage problems not faced once the child is older.

In analyzing your family's composition, remember that a family is not static; its size changes as it matures, first growing and then di-



minishing as children are born, grow up, and leave home. Storage needs change accordingly. Even during the years when the size remains constant, storage needs change as family members grow and develop different interests. In planning your use of storage space, try to keep in mind any changes that are likely to take place within your family during the next five years.

Your storage problems and the plan you work out to solve them also depend on your family's life-style. To help in thinking about the way your family prefers to live, consider these questions:

- Do you prefer to live formally or informally?
- Do you live inexpensively, moderately, or luxuriously?
- What is your approach to housekeeping: neglectful, resigned, average, or compulsively clean and orderly?
- How often do you entertain?
- Do you prefer to entertain casually, formally, or a combination of the two?
- What do you do for recreation and entertainment in the home? What entertainment equipment and supplies do you plan to store, and how accessible must they be?
- What are your family members' hobbies? How much storage space is needed for hobby supplies and equipment? Do any of the items have any special storage requirements?

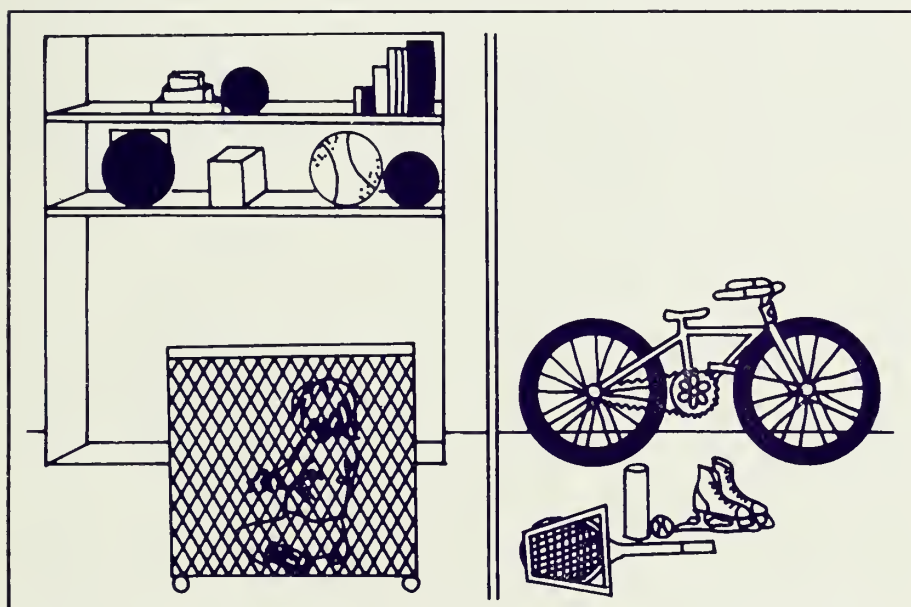


Figure 1. The types of items to be stored depend on the composition of your family.

A family that occasionally entertains a small number of guests at formal dinner parties, watches television and plays cards for entertainment, and has one member who collects coins will need to develop a storage plan very different from the one for a family that frequently has groups of 30 over for buffet suppers, goes canoeing and camping on the weekends, and has one member who raises rabbits. Clearly, no one storage pattern will work for all homes and all families. But the underlying principles of good storage will apply in any situation. Using them to work out a sound storage plan for your home will increase your sense of satisfaction about your home. We will discuss those fundamental principles in a later section.

Before you can develop an actual storage plan, however, you must know exactly how much storage space you have and you will need a detailed list of the items you want to store so that you can match the items to the space. The next two sections will guide you in making an inventory of the storage space in your home and of the items to be stored.

## EXAMINING YOUR HOME'S STORAGE SPACE

Before you consider the items that you need to store, take a good look at the storage space you have available. Look around in your home as if it is an empty house or apartment that you are planning to move into. Examining the type, size, and flexibility of your present storage facilities is an important step in developing a satisfactory storage plan.

Storage facilities can be divided into two categories — built-in (fixed) and portable (movable). Since you will be matching objects with available storage spaces when you develop your detailed storage plan, you will need to take an inventory of the amount of both built-in and moveable storage in your home.

### ***Built-in Storage***

Fixed or built-in storage spaces — such as closets, cupboards, racks, bookcases, or chests — are those that are a part of the structure of your home or are permanently attached to it (Figure 2). In most cases you do not have the opportunity to change the location of these units. Prepare some forms like Example Worksheet 1 and use them to take a room-by-room inventory of your available built-in storage. If your inventory is to be useful in developing a storage plan, you will need to record the location, dimensions, and internal arrangement of each built-in storage unit.

**Location.** Record the room or area in which the storage space is located.

**Dimensions.** Write down the height, width, and depth of the space.

**Internal Arrangement.** Indicate the presence of any dividers or storage organizers such as racks, shelves, partitions, or drawers. Also record the dimensions of the organizers and whether they are fixed or movable.

Example Worksheet 1 shows how to record two built-in storage units in a master bedroom: (1) a 6-foot-long closet 27 inches deep with

**EXAMPLE WORKSHEET 1: Built-in or Fixed Storage**

Location (room or area)	Type of storage unit	Dimensions of the storage area	Internal space and organizers
<i>Examples: Master bedroom</i>	<i>Built-in closet</i>	<i>6' long 27" deep</i>	<i>Rod 6' l and 5'6" above floor</i>
<i>Master bedroom</i>	<i>Four-drawer chest (built into the wall)</i>	<i>4' high 24" deep</i>	<i>Drawers: 18" w, 12" d, and 24" front to back</i>

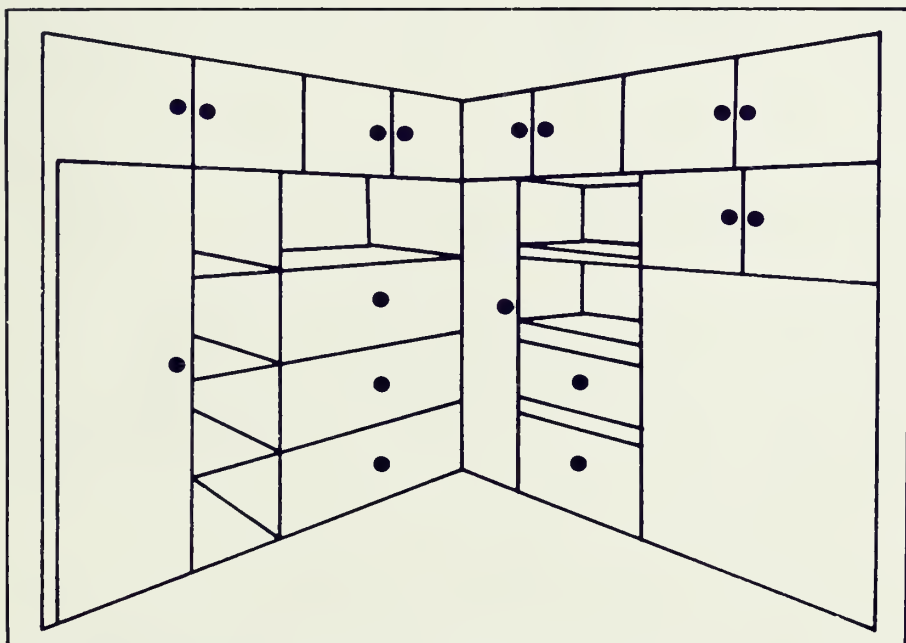


Figure 2. Built-in storage spaces such as closets, shelves, chests, and cupboards provide valuable storage areas in many homes.

no shelf and a rod running the length of the closet 5½ feet above the floor; and (2) a four-drawer built-in chest 4 feet high and 24 inches deep with drawers 18 inches wide, 12 inches high, and 24 inches deep (front to back).

### ***Portable Storage***

Movable or portable storage facilities include items such as chests of drawers, dressers, shelving, desks, file cabinets, bookcases, and specially designed storage units (Figure 3). These movable units provide flexibility in developing your storage plan because they can be moved to the location where they are needed the most.

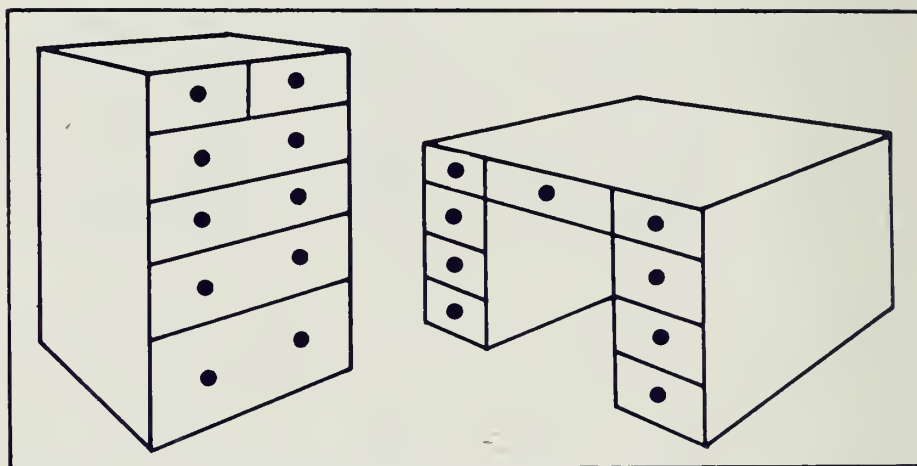


Figure 3. Movable storage units can be placed where extra storage space is needed.

Inventory your portable storage space using a worksheet like Example Worksheet 2. As you examine each storage unit, record its present location, the type of unit, its outside dimensions, and the size of the internal space. Also make note of any dividers or organizers within the space and indicate whether they are fixed or movable. Example Worksheet 2 shows how a typical chest of drawers would be listed.

### **TAKING STOCK OF ITEMS TO BE STORED**

To ensure that you have accurate knowledge of what items you need to allow storage for, it is a good idea to take an inventory periodically of the items you are storing or plan to store. To be useful in developing a

## EXAMPLE WORKSHEET 2: Portable Storage

Location (room or area)	Type of storage unit	Dimensions of the storage area	Internal space and organizers
<i>Example: Master bedroom</i>	<i>Four-drawer chest</i>	<i>Overall size: 4'h, 36" w, 18" d</i>	<i>Drawers: 32" w, 8" d, 16" front to back. No dividers.</i>

storage plan, your inventory should include the following information about each item:

- The area or areas where the item is normally used
- How often it is used, on the average (for example, daily, weekly, monthly, or seldom)
- Its approximate dimensions — height, depth, and length
- The number of items of this type to be stored.

Recording where the articles are used will guide you in selecting storage space so that each item can be kept as near as possible to the place where it will be needed. Knowing how often the article is used, you can arrange to keep frequently used items in readily accessible locations but avoid wasting prime storage space on things that are used seldom.

Recording the dimensions of each item will simplify the task of matching the items with the available space. It is not always easy to determine how much space linens occupy. The linen size chart on the back cover will help.

### Using the Worksheet

Example Worksheet 3 on page 11 shows how to record your inventory information. Prepare enough blank worksheets before you start so that they will be readily available. The first line of the worksheet shows an example of how to list two pillows, each 26 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 7 inches high, that are used in the guest room or the den, but only occasionally. When stored on top of each other, the two pillows would occupy a storage space 26 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 14 inches high.

The items listed in the leftmost column of the worksheet show how you might group individual items (for example, bedspreads, blankets, and comforters) into categories (bedding and linens) to help keep your list organized. Leave some blank spaces under each category heading to add items that occur to you later. Some of the categories you will probably want to include are listed in the box on page 10.



**Bedding and Linens:** Bath rugs, bedspreads, blankets, comforters, pillows, sheets, towels, washcloths.

**Clothing:** Blouses and shirts, dresses, pants or slacks, hats, jackets, personal items, shoes and boots, skirts, sleepwear, suits, sweaters, underwear.

**Children's Games and Toys:** Books, bicycles and tricycles, dolls, games, puzzles, sports equipment, tables and chairs, toy cars and trucks.

**Cleaning Equipment and Supplies:** Dust cloths, floor-care equipment, mops, pails, paper products, polishes, vacuum cleaner.

**Dining Room and Linens:** China, glassware, napkins, placemats, silverware, tablecloths.

**Home Business and Correspondence Supplies:** Account records, books, financial and personal records, instruction books, magazines, stationery.

**Kitchen Equipment:** Food items — beverages, canned goods, cereals, dried foods, mixes, staples; cleaning equipment and supplies; cooking utensils and equipment; fresh foods; small appliances.

**Laundry Equipment and Supplies:** Bleaches and softeners, detergents, iron, ironing board, soiled clothing, stain remover.

**Luggage:** Briefcases, luggage carrier, suitcases, trunks.

**Medicine and Health Care Items:** Heating pad, hot water bottle, medicine (external), medicine (internal), scale, thermometer, vaporizer.

**Outdoor and Seasonal Equipment:** Barbecue grill, gardening equipment, holiday decorations, lawn chairs and tables, lawnmowers, screens and storm windows, snow-removal equipment.

**Outdoor Clothing:** Boots, coats, gloves, hats, jackets, umbrellas.

**Recreation Equipment — Indoor:** Books and magazines, card tables and chairs, hobby supplies, records and tapes, stereo equipment, sewing and handwork items.

**Recreation Equipment — Outdoor:** Equipment for baseball, bicycling, camping, croquet, golf, fishing, hiking, skiing, swimming, and table tennis.

**Workshop Equipment and Supplies:** Fastening hardware (screws, nails, bolts), hand tools, lumber, power tools, plumbing supplies, wiring supplies.



### EXAMPLE WORKSHEET 3: Article Inventory

Item	Area(s) where used	Frequency of use (daily, weekly, monthly, seldom)	Dimensions	Number of items
<i>Examples:</i> <i>Guest pillows</i>	<i>Guest room or den</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>26" long 18" wide 7" high</i>	<i>2</i>
BEDDING AND LINENS				
<i>Bedspreads</i>	<i>Bedrooms- guest</i>	<i>Summer and winter, changed every 6 months</i>		<i>2</i>
<i>Blankets</i>	<i>Guest room</i>	<i>Winter only</i>	<i>Large box 24"l, 24"u, 18"h</i>	<i>3 boxes</i>
<i>Comforters</i>	<i>Guest room</i>	<i>Winter only</i>	<i>Box 18"l, 18"u, 18"h</i>	<i>2 boxes</i>
UNCLASSIFIED ARTICLES HELD FOR FUTURE USE				
<i>Unused furniture</i>		<i>Never</i>		<i>3 tables</i>
<i>Unused pictures &amp; accessories</i>		<i>Never</i>	<i>Box 36"l, 36"u, 24"h</i>	<i>1 box</i>
<i>Unused toys</i>		<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Box 16"l, 14"u, 18"h</i>	<i>1 box</i>
<i>Old magazines</i>		<i>Never</i>	<i>Box 24"l, 18"u, 12"h</i>	<i>14 boxes</i>

### TACKLING YOUR STORAGE PROBLEM

When you have inventoried your storage areas, you may be surprised at the amount of space available. Even so, you may find that the space required by the items you intend to store exceeds that of the available storage facilities. Or you may find that the way you are using the space makes it necessary to store things where they are not conveniently accessible.

You can, of course, simply do nothing and continue to live with an unsatisfactory and inefficient storage arrangement. The prices you pay

are wasted time, cluttered living quarters, and sometimes damage to items that are not stored where they will be protected.

If you choose to improve your storage situation, you have several options:

- Decrease the number of items to be stored
- Develop a storage plan to make better use of the space you have
- Obtain more storage space.

In most cases, the best solution involves all three of these options to some degree.

## ***Cleaning Out***

You can ease the burden on your storage space simply by disposing of items you no longer need or want. Look critically at each item in your inventory of articles to be stored, particularly those in the “unclassified” or “miscellaneous” category. Ask yourself when you last used the item. Examine seldom-used items and think twice about their value. A useful guide is the two-year rule: if you have not used, cleaned, or inspected an item for two years or seasons, seriously consider selling it, giving it away, or discarding it. Of course, this rule does not apply to items such as family heirlooms or collections that are kept for their sentimental or economic value. But be careful not to give in to the “pack-rat” or “garage-sale” syndrome: the tendency to keep items that you are not likely to use or even look at reasonably often.

## ***Developing a Storage Plan***

Once you have eliminated items you have decided not to keep, you can begin the task of matching the articles to be stored with the available space, using the inventory worksheets you prepared earlier.

In deciding where to store each item, keep in mind these four simple principles or keys to organized storage:

- Store items near their place of first or last use
- Place them where they are accessible and within easy reach
- Keep items that will be used together in the same place
- Store things where they will be protected and maintained in good condition.

**Store Near the Place of First or Last Use.** To conserve your time and energy, objects should be stored near the place where they are most often used. For example, towels, soap, and tissues should be kept in or near the bathroom, writing supplies and business records near a desk

and telephone. Serving dishes are best stored near the work area and dishwasher, china and flatware near the dining area or kitchen.

**Store Within Easy Reach.** Stored items should be easy to see, reach, and remove for use. Whenever possible, store items that are used often where you can reach them without stooping or stretching.

Store frequently used items at the correct level to be readily visible. The cone of vision illustrated in Figure 4 varies from one person to another, depending on the individual's height.

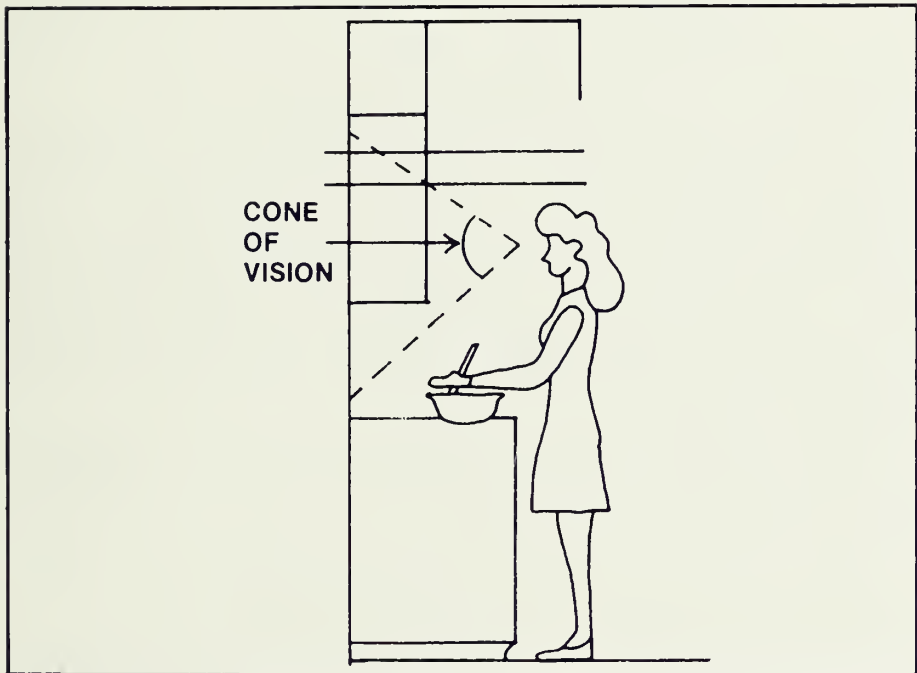


Figure 4. Objects stored within a person's cone of vision are easy to see and retrieve.

Heavy items held above the head or below waist level seem heavier than they really are and consequently are difficult to handle. Frequently used items, especially heavy ones, should be stored at a height that will require the least expenditure of energy when the object is removed or replaced. In Figure 5, drawing C shows the position that represents the least expenditure of energy and drawing A, the most.

The distance one can reach and move also depends on the individual. The person shown in Figure 6 is 66½ inches tall; note the extent of her maximum upward reach and her comfortable upward reach with two hands. Also of importance is the distance one can reach outward (or

sideways) and downward. The reach of each individual depends on the person's height, length of legs and arms, mobility, and flexibility.

If you know your own limitations, you can arrange to store things where you can reach them easily. Have a friend help you determine your height. Then, standing with your feet flat on the floor, measure how far you can reach upward, outward, and downward with your left hand, right hand, and both hands.

**Store Items That Are Used Together in the Same Place.** It makes sense to keep vacuum cleaner attachments near the cleaner itself, and to store recordings near the stereo system. It is usually best to store articles only one row deep (from front to back) on a shelf, except for items that are alike, such as canned goods, drinking tumblers, or towels.

**Store Things Where They Will Be Protected.** Choose storage locations that will protect items from damage and adverse conditions. Clothes, for example, should be kept where they can be hung up easily, kept free from wrinkles, and protected from dust, sunlight, pests, and mold. Candles should obviously not be stored in a hot attic where they will melt or a tent on a damp basement floor where it may mildew. Items that are used seasonally — lawn furniture and snow shovels, for example — should be kept where they will be protected during the seasons when they are not in use.

Keep these four principles of good storage in mind as you develop your storage plan. Consult Worksheets 1 and 2 to select a storage location for each item on Worksheet 3.

Don't be afraid to change things around in your home if it will help

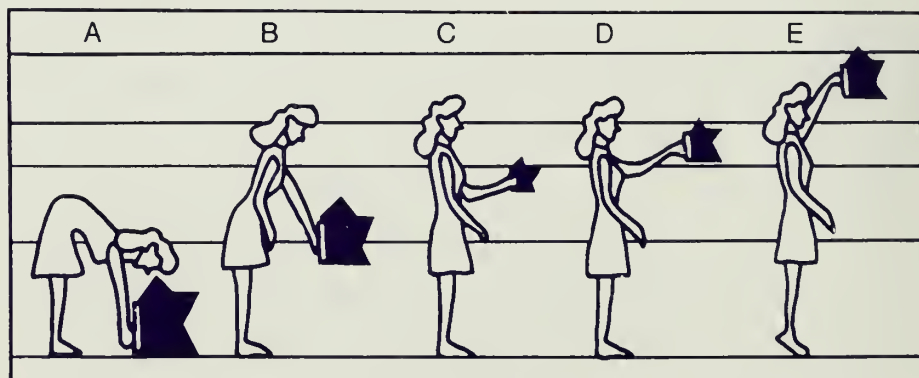


Figure 5. Removing or replacing objects stored between waist and shoulder level requires the least energy (C). Objects stored at or above head level (D,E) or below waist level (B) seem heavier. Retrieving objects at floor level (A) requires the most energy.

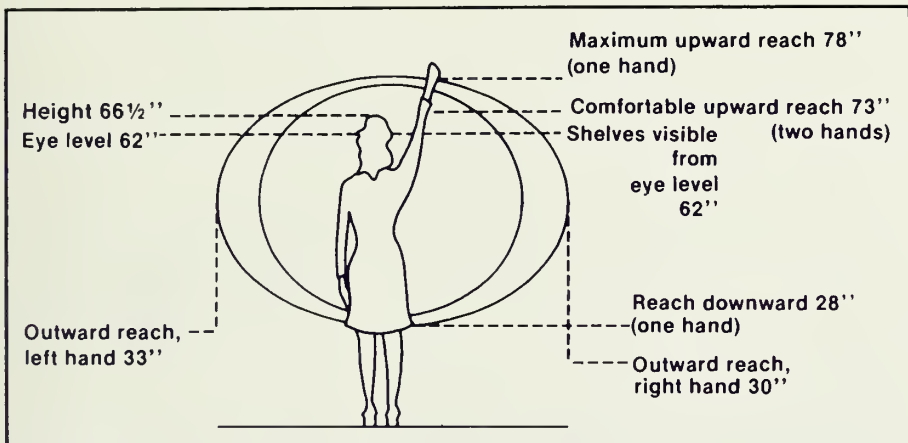


Figure 6. Reaches and working heights of a person 66½ inches tall.

you toward a better storage plan. You may want to consider moving one of your portable storage units from one room to another to provide more storage space where it is needed.

Sometimes adding dividers or organizers within a storage unit will allow you to take better advantage of available space. A number of commercial products such as adjustable shelves, drawers, or brackets are available to help improve the usefulness of storage space. You can also make some organizers yourself from wood, metal, or simply from cardboard boxes. Bear in mind, too, that sometimes the usefulness of storage space for your needs can be improved by removing or adjusting existing organizers, shelves, or dividers.

If in completing your plan you find that you are still short of space, start looking for other storage possibilities in your home. One alternative is to purchase a new portable storage unit. Many multiuse furnishings, such as storage ottomans and benches, are on the market. You might also consider reclaiming some unused space in your home by redoing an area in the garage, in the attic, or under a stairway.

When you are satisfied with your storage plan, move the items to their new locations. Try out the arrangement for a month or two and see how well it works. You will probably find that you want to make some minor adjustments. Remember that your storage needs are not static because your family is likely to be changing with time. Reconsider your storage plan from time to time to ensure that it still meets your needs. Continue to dispose of items that fall into disuse. A comparatively small amount of time devoted to developing and maintaining a storage plan can pay big dividends by saving your time and energy, helping you keep your home orderly, and protecting the items you store.

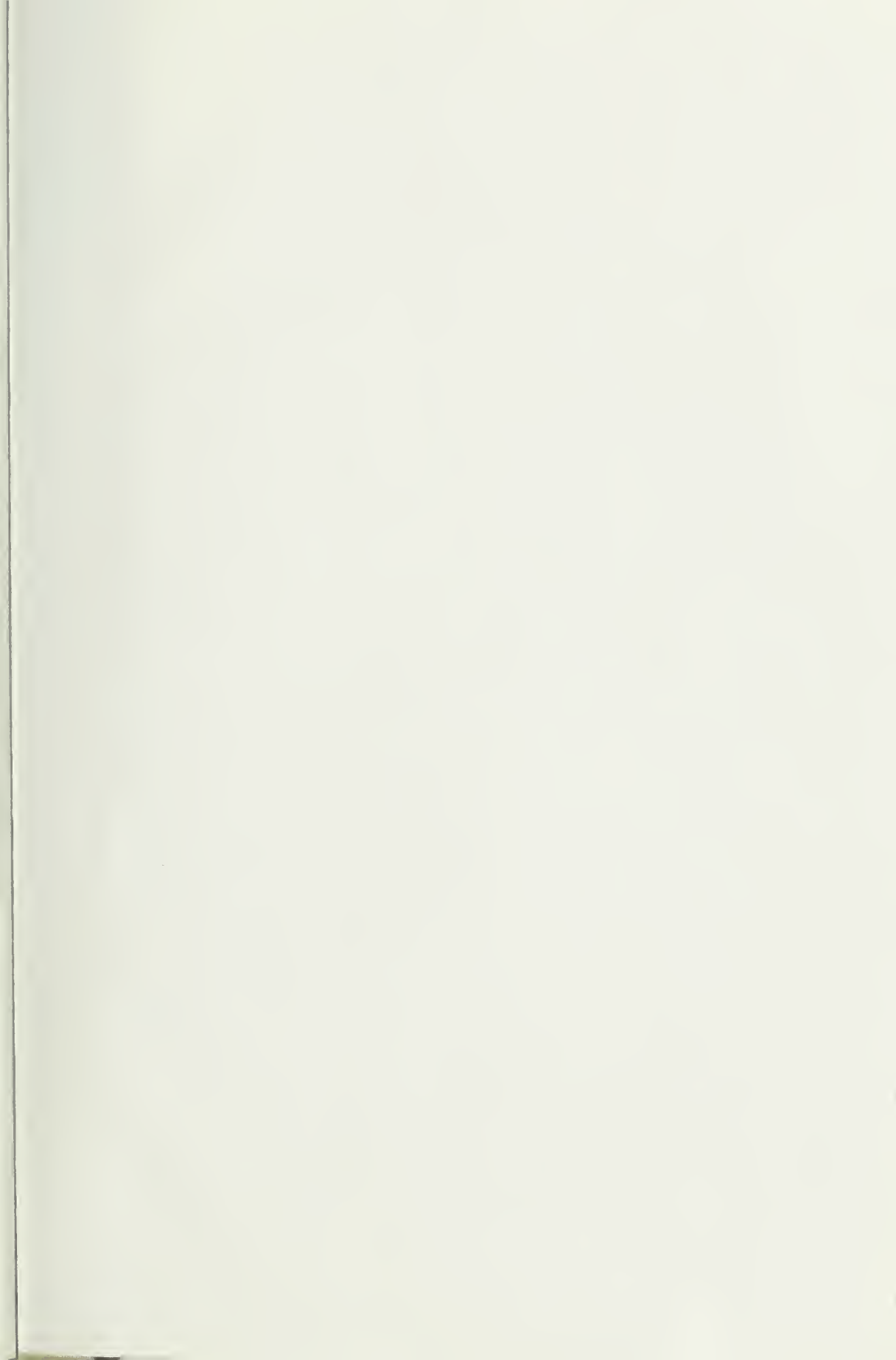


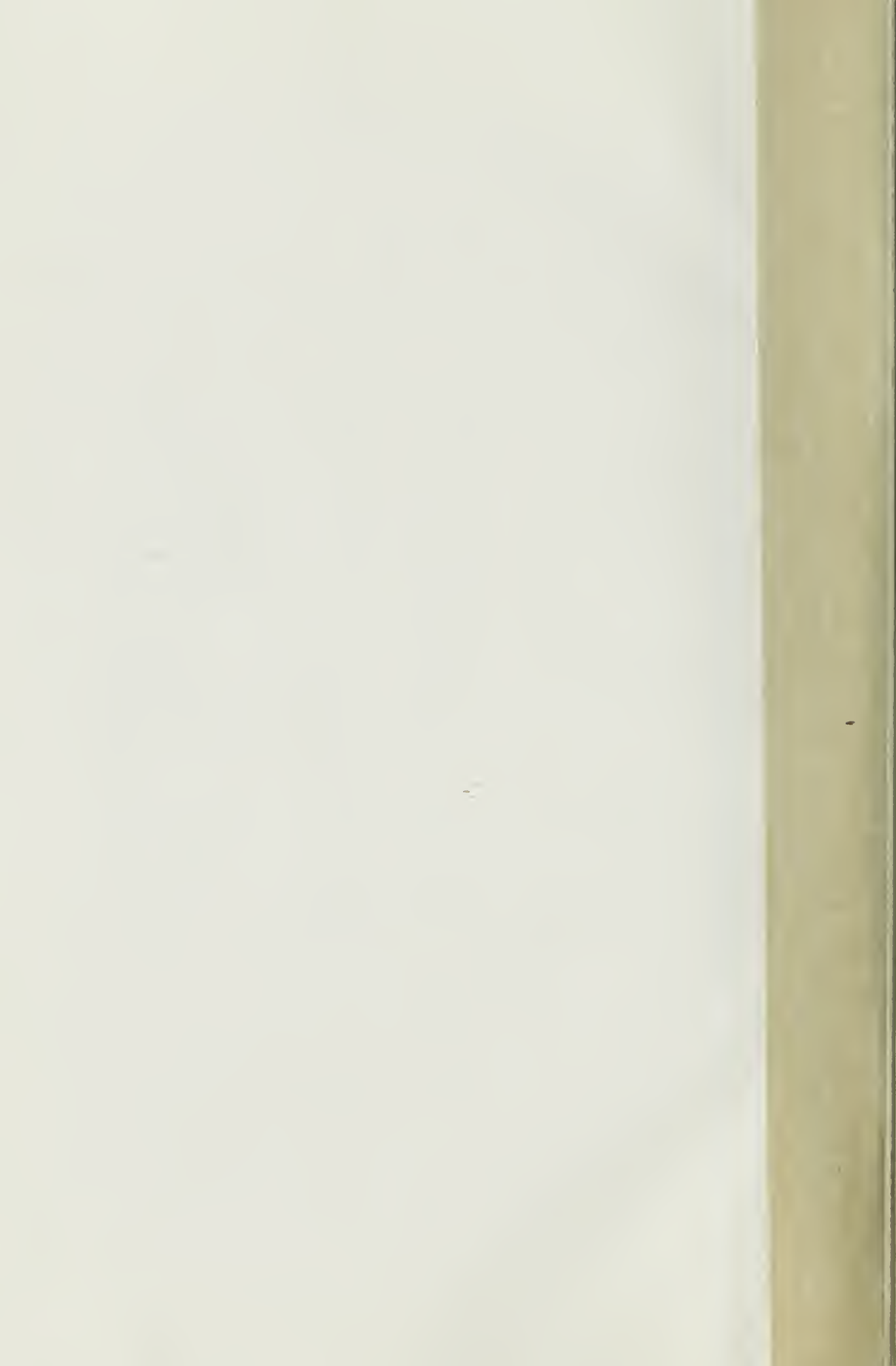
### LINEN SIZES

Articles	Folded		Dimensions of stack		
	Lengthwise	Crosswise	Length	Width	Height
			<i>inches</i>		
Six sheets, double bed . . . . .	Eighths	Eighths	12	14	10
Six pillowcases . . . . .	Thirds	Fourths	8	9	6
Two bed pads, double bed . . . . .	Thirds	Fourths	19	19	5-6*
Two bedspreads, not napped, double bed. .	Fourth	Fourth	22	26	4-6*
Two bedspreads, napped, double bed. .	Fourth	Fourth	24	26	9-10*
Two blankets, winter weight, double bed. .	Fourth	Fourth	21	23	12-16*
Two blanket sheets, double bed . . . . .	Fourth	Fourth	21	23	6
Two mattress covers, double bed . . . . .	Fourth	Fourth	14	19	3
One pillow . . . . .	...	...	26	18	6-7
Six washcloths . . . . .	Halves	Halves	7	8	4
Six bath towels. . . . .	Thirds	Fourth	12	10	10-12*
Six hand towels, terry . . . . .	Thirds	Halves	14	7	7-10*
Six hand towels, linen . . . . .	Thirds	Halves	12	6	1/2
Two bathtub mats. . . .	Fourth	Halves	12	11	6
Two bath rugs, 21 by 36 inches. . . . .	Halves	Halves	19	11	5
Two tablecloths, 2 yards long. . . . .	Fourth	Fourth	18	15	3
Six napkins . . . . .	Halves	Halves	10	10	2

\* Depends on thickness of fabric.









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